

Appl. No. : 09/997,396
Filed : November 28, 2001

REMARKS

Claims 1-53 are pending in the present application, with Claims 33-45 and 51 withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1-32, 46-50, 52 and 53 stand rejected as being anticipated by Gates et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,203,613). Claims 1, 14, 15, 20 and 52 were amended in Applicants' previous response to clarify that in the claimed methods the recited metal oxide is deposited by multiple ALD cycles and subsequently reducing "the metal oxide" (formed by the multiple cycles) to an elemental metal. Gates does not teach or suggest depositing a metal oxide layer by multiple ALD cycles followed by reduction of the metal oxide. Rather, in each ALD cycle Gates reduces any metal oxide precursor to metal for some recipes. For other recipes, metal oxide is deposited by multiple ALD cycles but the metal oxide so produced is never reduced to elemental metal. With respect to Claim 46, neither the recited method nor a structure that would be produced by the recited method are taught or suggested anywhere in Gates.

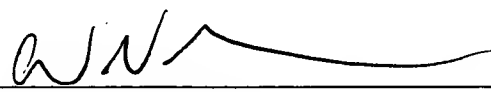
The Office Action mailed on August 9, 2005 indicates that "Applicants submission filed on April 22, 2005 has been entered." Thus, Applicants believe that the amendments were entered. However, the Office Action does not address the amendments and does not indicate how the Examiner believes that Gates anticipates the pending claims. In fact, it appears that the rejections are essentially identical to those made in the previous Office Action.

As the Examiner has not identified how the Gates reference anticipates each and every element of the pending claims, Applicants submit that a prima facie rejection has not been made. For the reasons discussed in their previous response, Applicants submit that the present claims are not taught or suggested by Gates and that the Application is in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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